



BIG SKY LIBRARIES

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY



Number 73

September/October, 2001

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"NRIS is focusing its efforts on bringing natural resource information, and the tools needed to access, display, and analyze the information, directly to Montana's citizens via the Internet."

Using the Natural Resource Information System On Line

Using Montana State Library's Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) has never been easier. NRIS is focusing its efforts on bringing natural resource information, and the tools needed to access, display and analyze the information directly to Montana's citizens via the Internet.

Your public access computers can put into your patron's hands an incredible array of information from a local or statewide perspective. Several months ago, NRIS launched a web-based mapping application (Thematic Mapper) that brings mapping capability to users anywhere.

Try it out at <http://nr.is.state.mt.us/mapper>.

Recent improvements to the Thematic Mapper include:

- Land ownership coverage known as the stewardship layer [described in the last issue of BSL].
- Designated and Incorporated Places from the 2000 Census data.
- Data from the Geographic Names Information System incorporated into the search tools, providing access to information on almost any named place or feature in Montana.
- New high school and elementary school district boundaries and enrollment data.
- Locations of 170,000 wells providing access to related data from the Ground-Water Information Center at the Mon-

tana Bureau of Mines.

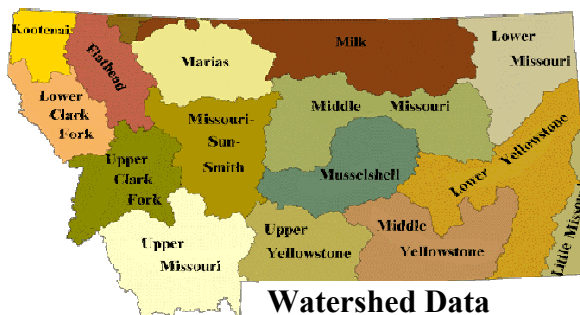
- Enhancing the NRIS topographic mapping tool (TopoFinder) to allow viewing of aerial photographs.
- NRIS' Montana Drought Monitoring 2001 web which provides monthly snow and water information with maps and reports developed using data from the Natural Resources Conservation

Service. Recreationists, irrigators, fisheries personnel, and others, including the Montana Drought Advisory Committee, use this information to evaluate

current and seasonal surface water supplies.

- Hunting districts for antelope, bear, deer, elk, and mountain lions.
- The Legislative Districts Map 2001 update.

NRIS on-line data holdings are extensive and growing. We continue to search out new tools for information acquisition and dissemination and to constantly improve our clearinghouse. NRIS strives to be the best resource available to state agencies, private businesses, and all Montana citizens when it comes to locating and using information relating to Montana's natural resources. Please encourage your public access computer users to look to NRIS to fulfill their natural resource information needs. Access begins at <http://nr.is.state.mt.us>!



Watershed Data



Karen Strege
State Librarian



Karen's Travel

Schedule

October 20 - Broad Valleys Federation, Bozeman
 October 21-23 - COSLA meeting, Salt Lake City
 November 1 - MLA Board, Bozeman
 November 5 - Networking Task Force - Helena
 November 6 - ILL study committee - Helena
 November 7 - UM Library Faculty - Missoula
 November 28, 29 - BCR Board meeting - Denver

A Word From Our State Librarian

The planning process is in full swing at MSL. As of today, federation members in Golden Plains, South-Central, Sagebrush, and Pathfinder have discussed strategic issues related to MSL's efforts for library development, including the Montana Library Network (MLN). Also, the Networking Task Force has looked at issues concerning MLN. Broad Valley and Tamarack Federation members, OMNI participants, and UM Library faculty will discuss these issues at upcoming meetings.

Staff members of MSL's Li-

brary and Information Services (LISD) and the Natural Resources Information System (NRIS) have reviewed their existing plans and will make revisions. Also, the Talking Book Library staff will rewrite their section of the agency plan.

The outcome of these discussions will be a comprehensive plan that will guide all of MSL's activities for the next three-to five years. This plan will be based on the needs of our constituents, those who use and will use our services. We are also relying heavily on the recently completed agency evaluation in our planning.

The plan will be our guidebook for upcoming continuing education events, LSTA projects, marketing endeavors, services to state agency employees, and legislative planning, to name but a few.

Realizing the community's interest in the plan and our inability to talk with every member of our community during this draft stage, we plan to release a draft document for comments later in this year. We will use these comments to finalize the draft for possible Commission approval at their February, 2002 meeting.

Commissioner's Corner: The Charitable Gift Annuity and the Montana Endowment Tax Credit

by David Johnson, Chair of the MSL Commission

"In exchange for a lump sum payment from the donor, you agree to pay a fixed dollar amount for the rest of his or her life."



In the last newsletter, we discussed the benefits of a separate library foundation. For your patrons who want to make a significant gift, there are important federal and state tax benefits that provide an incentive to give. In particular, we mentioned the Montana Endowment Tax Credit, and that for "planned gifts" made in 2001 to the permanent, qualified endowment fund of your foundation or your library, a taxpayer can claim a credit against his or her Montana income tax of 50% of today's value of the charitable portion of the gift, with a maximum credit of \$10,000 per taxpayer.

To qualify, the "planned gift" must provide for payments back to the donor for life or a mini-

mum set period of time. One of the most popular gifting methods is the charitable gift annuity. A charitable gift annuity can be created by a short agreement between your institution and the donor. In exchange for a lump sum payment from the donor, you agree to pay a fixed dollar amount for the rest of his or her life.

An illustration is helpful. Assume a 70-year old wants to transfer \$50,000, in exchange for a lifetime annuity. To determine the annual payment rate, most charities follow the tables issued by the American Council on Gift Annuities, whose website is <http://www.acga-web.org>. Their latest table suggests a rate of 7.2% for a person aged 70. This

requires an annual payment to the donor of \$3,600, which is 7.2% of the \$50,000 contribution. This continues for the person's lifetime, and will terminate at death. Payments can also be structured over other periods of time, such as monthly, quarterly or semiannually.

Based on current IRS interest rate calculations, the contributor in the example is eligible for a federal charitable contribution deduction of \$18,522. Then, for Montana purposes, the donor can also offset up to \$9,261 against his or her income tax liability, which is 50% times the charitable contribution element of \$18,522.

Good luck with your fundraising efforts!

Trustee Base: Budgeting Money and Time

By: Gary O. Rolstad, Associate State Librarian, State Library of Louisiana

Most library board meetings include a regular review of the budget, and other money matters. Board members are justifiably concerned about the budget, because the position they hold is one whereby the public entrusts them to see that tax funds are spent as designated, and as efficiently as possible. In some meetings, the expenditures of the library are reviewed in great detail.

The problems with detailed management of funds is that it can create one of those forest and tree confusions. Probably the most important role of the board is to see that the library has adequate funds to operate an effective and modern public service. This service is not cheap. Therefore the board oversight must begin with the perspective of financial planning and security.

The day-to-day bills can and should be entrusted to the library staff. They are knowledgeable about the acquisition of books, the temperature of the facilities, the effectiveness of the circulation system, the quantity of paper required for the public printers, and a hundred other items

delegated among staff and already discussed among them. The library board should not need to rehash this kind of minutiae.

In fact, if you are examining every check written by the staff, it may be indicative of some problems. First, it may be that the library does NOT have adequate funds, and so it is easy to retreat into watching how nickels are dispersed among competing priorities within the library system and its budget.

Take the time to review not checks, but the per capita support of the library, or the rising costs of books and automation and staff benefits. Talk about long-range solutions, and not line items in the budget.

A second and more sensitive issue is the matter of trust. Once again, when funds are not adequate, our concerns can be misplaced by examining individual decisions instead of organization missions. Staff must be given the trust and allowed to earn it. This means no micromanagement. Ask the public if they are getting their reference questions answered, not how much a reference book costs. The solutions might be more staff train-

ing, or more information resources. And these things cost money.

The taxpayers will support innovative and effective services, even when they cost a little more, especially if the library delivers what it promises. Therefore talk about services and their delivery, and take charge of the money crunch by deciding what mission must be achieved, not what office supply can be omitted. Let the staff decide which items are necessary for a good daily operation so it's OK that every board agenda reviews the budget. Help to insure the budget is a product of long-range vision and planning. This kind of focus will help us see a forest of opportunity instead of a problematic tree.



"Probably the most important role of the board is to see that the library has adequate funds to operate an effective and modern public service."

Please note:

Inside this issue are two inserts to update the Montana Library Directory.

The State and Federal Depositories sheet replaces the old pages.

The MSL Commission requested that an MSL staff listing page be added.

MSL Volunteer Program 20th Anniversary



Lexi Lund, Christina Rose, Erin Vashro, and Jessica Vashro accepting awards from Cheri Bergeron.

The 20th Anniversary of MSL's Volunteer Program was celebrated on September 14, at the Montana Club in Helena. Seventy people gathered to eat lasagna and anniversary cake. Christie Briggs, Talking Book Regional Librarian, speaking during lunch, acknowl-

edged America's tragedy of the previous Tuesday and emphasized how important it was to go ahead with the luncheon to honor volunteers.

Dave Walter, keynote speaker, shared humorous excerpts from his book Speaking Ill of the Dead. All the books Dave has written or edited have been or are being recorded by the Talking Book Recording Program. Following Dave's remarks, Darlene Staffeldt, Statewide Library Resources Program Manager, presented the 2001 Telephone Pioneer Award. John Doig, who has been helping repair Talking Book cassette players for the past ten years, was this year's recipient. The Special Appreciation Award was given to Lea Blunn by Briggs. Lea has worked as a volunteer for the past 18 years. She has narrated and monitored books, assisted Reader Advisor's with patrons, kept track of all volunteer hours, and coordinated the books recorded in Montana with the National Library

Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Bob and Marie Vanisko and Gil Gilbertson received this year's Re-

cording Team of the Year Award. Bob has recorded 11 books since he began narrating in 1991.

Alexis Lund, Christina Rose, Erin and Jessica Vashro, Kenzie Clark, Elizabeth Semple, Emily Pederson, and Ariel Tange were Youth Volunteers this year. Cheri Bergeron, State Library Commissioner, representing the Office of Public Instruction, awarded Certificates of Appreciation and toe-socks to those present. Cheri commended these young women for their hard work and their modeling of the service. Receiving MSL Certificates of Appreciation for their "Beyond the Call of Duty" service to the library were: Velleda Bates and her guide dog SeeMore;



William Bell, Vernie Kralicik, Mary Davis, Glen Rasmussen, Minnie Koenig, and Cyd Slattery watch awards ceremony.

William Bell; Edith "E.T." Tanna; Dorothy Carpenter; Gil Gilbertson; Inez Hohn; Jean Smith; Barbara Harris; and Mary Davis.

Volunteers who had five years of service at the library were given hand-painted canisters filled with candy. One volunteer was heard to say he was disappointed because he had expected a new car. Ten-year volunteers received either a sweat-shirt with quilted hot air balloons on them, or caps with a hot-air balloon and MSL Volunteers embroidered on it. Every volunteer was presented with a glass or travel mug decorated by the library staff members.

The luncheon ended with a beautifully rendered solo of "Dona Nobis Pacem" - Give Us Peace.



Bob Vanisko, Millie Huxley, Edith "ET" Tanna, John DeHaas, and Cyd Slattery accepting awards for ten years of service.

Gates Summer Institutes in 2002

MSL has been awarded a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Training Program Grant for State Libraries. The grant's goal is "to promote long-term sustainability of public access computing in public libraries and to assist state libraries in meeting the ongoing needs of public libraries for training in the use of information technology resources."

In Montana, the grant will be used to fund three Gates Summer Institutes [SI] on college campuses during the summer of 2002. Each SI will offer three days of intensive training to directors and staff of Montana's public libraries and branches.

Professional trainers from the Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR) will present the training for each SI in campus computer labs. Training will feature hands-on basic and advanced Internet skills/reference use (including InfoTrac and MLN), network management skills, web site creation and development, maximizing public access software, and teaching the Internet to groups and individuals. Tentative scheduling: MSU-Bozeman, June 11-13; U of M-Missoula, July 9-11; and MSU-Billings, August 6-8. Enrollment will begin in April.



"...the grant will be used to fund three Gates Summer Institutes [SI] on three college campuses during the summer of 2002."

2001 Fall Workshop

In September, ninety-six librarians from across the state attended the 2001 MSL Fall Workshop in Billings, enjoying the facilities and setting of the MSU-Billings campus. MSL appreciates all the assistance provided by Jane Howell, Director of the MSU-Billings Library, and



Montana librarians practice book mending techniques taught by Michael McColgin, Conservation Officer for the Arizona State Archives in Phoenix.

her staff. During the two-days, librarians were busy using special adhesives and rice paper to mend books, draft requests for funds to be used in grant proposals, and practicing techniques to enhance the reading skills of children. The librarians learned together, dined together, and shared



Library Director Jane Howell (standing) welcomes the Anacosta delegation (Honore Bray, Colleen Ferguson and Lenore Manning) to the MSU-Billings campus during the dessert reception held in the library.

their ideas, problems, strategies and successes with one another. MLA's School/Library Media Division also held an informal breakfast meeting to recruit new members and plan upcoming activities.

Collection Management Honor Roll for 2001

The Montana State Library Commission's Collection Management Honor Roll was established to recognize and commend libraries in the state that are committed to building shared databases of Montana library records. In 2000, a total of 47 libraries were honored, including 9 academic, 1 special, 31 public, and 6 school libraries.

Libraries wishing to be considered for the Montana State Library Commission's Collection Management Honor Roll for 2001 must have a current approved collection management policy on file with MSL by January 31, 2002.

Other requirements for making the Honor Roll:

- Over 50% of the library's titles must be entered on the OCLC/WLN database; and
- The library has been actively adding and/or deleting titles from the OCLC/WLN database for at least the past three years

Libraries meeting all requirements will receive Collection Management Honor Roll certificates and be acknowledged at the MLA Conference Awards Luncheon in Great Falls next April for their commitment to collection development and sharing resources. Contact: Sue Jackson (1-800-338-5087, sujackson@state.mt.us).



Big Sky Libraries

Big Sky Libraries is a publication of
the

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Karen Strege, State Librarian

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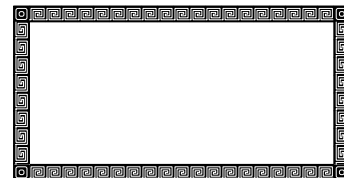
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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
<http://msl.state.mt.us>

Spotlight: Tracy Cook, Statewide Technology Librarian

Tracy Cook works for the Library Development Department of the Montana State Library as a Statewide Technology Librarian. She provides support for the libraries in the Golden Plains and Pathfinder Federations. Her office is located in Great Falls.

Tracy started working for the Montana State Library in August. She moved here from Tucson, Arizona, where she was working on her library science degree. She has a Master's in Information Resources and Library Science from the University of Arizona and a BS in Accounting from the

University of Wyoming.

An army brat, Tracy has lived in many different states, but considers Wyoming to be her old home.

She lived in Cheyenne and Laramie, working in libraries at both places. Tracy has worked for community college and public libraries. Over the years, she worked in circulation, interlibrary loan, reference, and young adult services, as well as helping with a Recon project in cataloging.

In Arizona, Tracy worked for the public library and the School of Information Re-

sources and Library Science at the University of Arizona. While in library school, she worked with the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records in conjunction with the Arizona Summer Institutes.

Tracy has also worked for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Outside of work, Tracy enjoys traveling (a good thing with this job), hiking, music, and crocheting.



Tracy Cook,
Statewide Technology Librarian

